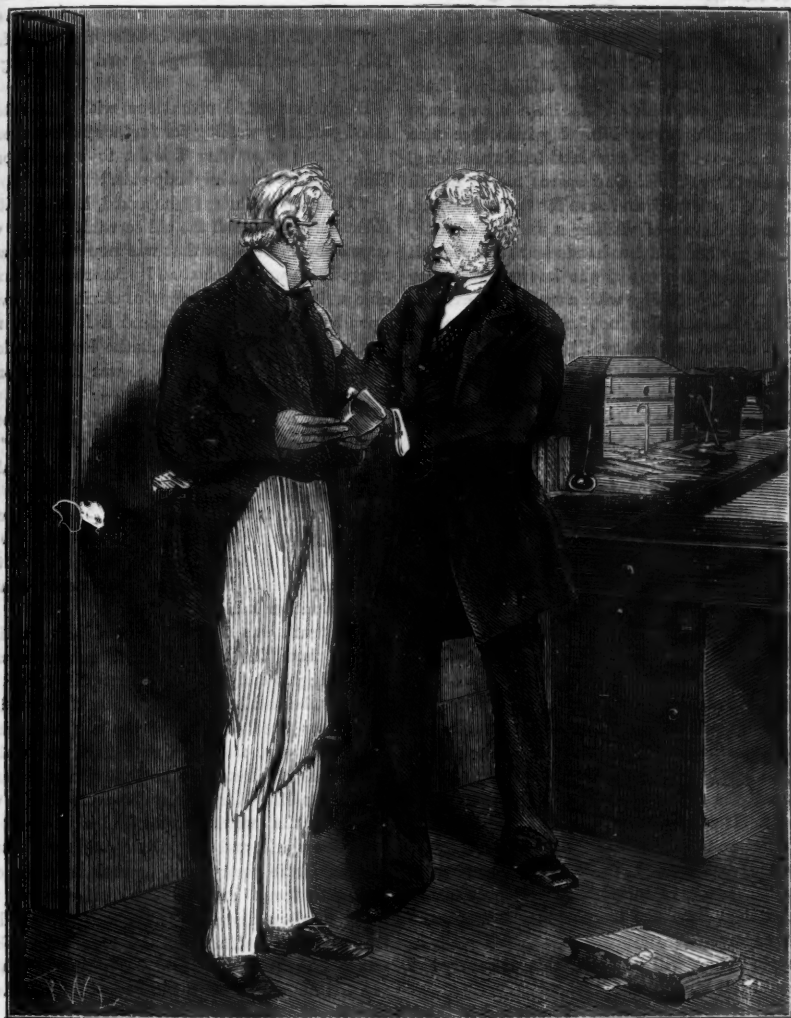


THE QUIVER

Saturday, August 28, 1869.



"Tell me his name."—p. 741.

UNDER FOOT.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "MAGGIE LYNNE," ETC.

CHAPTER L.—"THEM FURREN PARTS."

HOW long that morning was to Hugh's impatient fancy! the minutes seemed to drag themselves into hours; and as he listened to the measured ticking of the old clock on the stairs, he became dissatisfied even with that time-honoured family relic, which had commanded such high respect from him in his boyhood.

"How slowly the time goes," he muttered. "I

could even fancy that the old clock is lagging behind; and it seems to me that the family don't intend to rise this morning. Ah! that must be Chriss going downstairs."

A fit of restlessness was upon him; he grew tired of watching the sparrows, and left his seat at the window to begin pacing the narrow limits of his room by way of relief for his feelings.

"At last—at last—there is hope of light and freedom from this doubt, which would have been always a blighting brand upon my life. My innocence once proved, I shall go out to the new land fearing nothing, hoping everything, for if God spares me in health and strength, I can work and save for the old people, give father the chance of visiting a warmer climate, and let dear mother fold her hands and rest after all her toil. Then, if I prosper, who knows but I may even be able to help Madge with a wedding-portion—that is, if her ladyship does not forestall me by going off before I achieve my fortune?"

The young man's face glowed, and his eyes sparkled as he went on with his aerial architecture, building castles for those he loved. But the next moment the bright look was overcast with a serious shade of thought, and he stopped suddenly in his walk.

"What if Giles Royton fails to keep his word? No, no; I will not think that he would mislead me so cruelly. He said that he would as soon trifle with his own life, and I believe him; he promised to tell all, and he said he could prove his words. At last, Daniel Crawton will know I have not abused his trust in me, that I was not ungrateful and unworthy. To think that all will be made clear to him before I leave England! I thank thee, God, for this mercy."

Here the broad chest heaved, and utterly overcome by his feelings, poor Hugh dropped into a chair, and gave way as he had never done since the day of his discharge, when he brought home his wounded heart, and poured the miserable news into his mother's pitying ear. It was characteristic of Hugh Crawton's generous nature that, engrossed with the thought of his innocence being about to be proved, he seemed (for the time) to have completely lost sight of the fact that it had been the treacherous work of some unknown enemy.

"How glad Mark will be about this discovery! I wish I could tell him at once."

Simple-hearted, noble Hugh! It was sad to think of such perfect, confiding trust in another, rudely shaken as it would be, when Giles Royton had fulfilled his promise.

"I have hours yet to wait before I know anything, for I am not to meet Mark until after dinner. It's no use, I must do something to keep my hands busy and help the time to pass."

Acting on this idea, he hurried down-stairs, and out to the garden, a glance into the sitting-room, as he passed, showing him that it was still empty. He had taken possession of a garden-rake, and was

making himself busy about some of the beds, when he heard his name suddenly called, and, looking up, saw Chriss coming towards him and endeavouring to attract his attention by animated gestures with a blacklead brush, which she carried in her hand.

"Good morning, Chriss. "Do you want me?"

"Yes, Mr. Hugh. I've been on the watch for you this half-hour, for I thought you'd be coming down first."

Hugh suspended operations with his rake, and stood patiently waiting for further information.

"There's something I want to say to you, Mr. Hugh, unknown to anybody else."

"What is it, Chriss?" he asked, looking with considerable curiosity at the old servant. There was an expression in her eyes that was new to him, and the rugged face was pinched and puckered into innumerable wrinkles. Some powerful anxiety was working upon her mind. She advanced a few steps nearer, casting a backward glance at the house-windows, as if to assure herself that no one was looking on, then said, in a low, confidential voice—

"First, I want to know if you're quite bent on going away to them furren parts, Mr. Hugh?"

"Yes, Chriss, I mean to go out and make my fortune."

"Fortune, indeed!" murmured the old servant, with a gloomy shake of the head. At the same moment she absently rubbed her chin with the blacklead brush, leaving a dark smear that produced a rather ludicrous effect.

The truth was that Chriss had been fretting inwardly from the time she first caught a whisper about Hugh's emigration to Australia. Next to her mistress, he had been her idol from babyhood. She was never tired of arguing the subject to herself: "Here he was, after going through more sickness than most children—for he took the measles much worse than Miss Margaret, and fought through whooping-cough that would have killed a score of babies with less spirit, and now, after growing up to be a fine handsome young man, he must be going off and trying to tempt Providence by running the risk of being swallowed up by fishes, or killed and eaten by cannibals." This was the view which she now put to him in her own graphic way. But he only ran his fingers through his curly hair, and laughed merrily.

"Why, Chriss, this is all very silly, and I should be vexed with you, only your talk seems to cheer me up this morning; it's something like taking a tonic."

"I don't know nor care about tonics," she replied, dubiously; "but I do know that you've no business to think of going away, Mr. Hugh."

"Well, then, Chriss, all that I can say is that you are a most incorrigible old woman. But what is this?—what are you doing?"

These questions were called forth by a most extraordinary action on the part of Chriss, who had taken

from her pocket a small canvas bag, which she was trying to push stealthily into his hand. He caught the clink of money, and the crisp rustle of paper, which he rightly guessed to be bank-notes. It was the remains of a legacy which she had lately inherited from a deceased uncle, to which she had added some small savings of her own—a little hoard which she had kept, as she phrased it, to come in for a rainy day, which meant a time of need, either for herself or her mistress.

Wondering, Hugh repeated his question, "What is this, Chriss?"

"Something for you to take with you, for my sake, if you must go."

The colour flushed into Hugh's face as he said, decisively, "What! take your hard-earned money? I can't do it, Chriss."

"It's no earnings of mine—at least very little of it," responded the capitalist, almost angrily. "It may be of use to you in them furren parts, and I don't want it."

"But, my good Chriss, I cannot take it," persisted Hugh, trying to put the bag back in her hand. It was rejected with something between an indignant gulp and a sob.

"I won't have it, so it may just go. You won't take it from me, Mr. Hugh, and it's pride; though I did teach you to walk when you was a baby-boy, you turn round and deny me that bit of pleasure. But I might have known you'd be above me now, and I ought to keep my place better."

Here the old servant fumbled suspiciously with the corner of her apron, and made a movement to turn away.

She was stopped by her young master. "Well, well, my good Chriss, since you put it in that light, I suppose I must do as you bid me; but remember, it is to be only as a loan, to be paid back with interest. I could not take it from you on any other condition; it would not be just, Chriss."

At that moment the voice of Margaret was heard calling for her brother, and the next instant the young lady made her appearance in the passage. Then Chriss was glad to hurry away, congratulating herself on having successfully carried her point, and feeling, in her own mind, greatly relieved and comforted by her little investment of capital.

CHAPTER LI.

GILES ROYTON'S REVELATION.

DANIEL CRAWTON sat alone in his private office. The junior partner had contented himself with giving a few hours to business in the morning, and then left, pleading an engagement with a friend as an excuse for his absence during the afternoon. The old merchant sat at his desk, his chin resting in his hand, and the warm light falling strongly on his bent, grey head and thought-lined face. He was unoccupied in business hours—an unusual state of

things for the man self-disciplined and trained to a life of daily plodding industry, with his untiring energy of hand and brain. But, lately, a strange weakness seemed creeping over him. The vital forces were held together with less vigour in that powerful frame, hitherto remarkable for its perfect physical preservation. The light seemed to be wasting in the lamp, and now, as he sat, he looked worn, and drooping, and aged. It was not like him to succumb to weariness at midday—the man who had always eschewed self-indulgence of any kind, and modelled his life according to his own stern theories of labour, husbanding his time as though the minutes were so much gold.

"I scarcely know what to make of Mark," he murmured, thinking aloud, a habit which had grown upon him in his solitude. "I begin to fear that his habits are hardly those of a business man. Then his temper seems unequal, and he takes sudden fits of restlessness. I could almost fancy, from his manner, that he has made proposals to May Rivers, and been refused. I have found out that he has no chance there, and he is an idiot if he has not been able to make the discovery for himself. I would put the question to him, only it is my way never to force confidence where I feel it is withheld."

Here the old man relapsed into a reverie, which was broken by one of the junior clerks, who came with some business question, which seemed to belong to the cashier's department, for he was curtly dismissed, and referred to that individual, who was the one that had succeeded Hugh Crawton.

This interruption, and the mention of the cashier, had the effect of changing the current of the merchant's thoughts. He took out a memorandum-book, turned to a particular page, and sighed as he read over some of the entries.

"More than twelve months, and, from what I hear, he has never got employment since. How have they lived? Robert's annuity would be wretchedly small to meet such necessities, and they have never once applied to me for help. It may be that they blame me for harshness to the lad, and she—she among the rest, for I remember he is her only son. Would that I had never seen him! He did me a service once—perhaps the greatest that one human creature can do for another. And he was so like her: even that last day he seemed to look at me with his mother's eyes. Perhaps I was to blame for putting him in the way of temptation, which he was not strong enough to resist; and yet I watched him so closely, and found him so different to Robert: no trace of his selfishness and feeble narrowness of mind. By this time I should have learned to have no more idols; but I could have taken that lad to my heart—nearer, nearer, than all the rest, even Mark, who never crossed me, and has made himself a pattern in most things. But for Hugh, I would give now more than half the wealth, which it has been the

work of my life to win, if he could only prove himself innocent, and I could raise him again to the position from which he has fallen."

At that moment, as if in answer to his thoughts, and before he had time to compose his troubled face, there was a low, hesitating knock at the door, which seemed to imply some sort of apprehension in the person outside, and gave the impression of want of confidence in himself, or his errand. Daniel Crawton knew the intruder from his knock; but his mind was, that day, so strangely out of tune, that he inwardly groaned at the necessity which forced his attention to business.

He spoke irritably. "Is that you, Royton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Come in."

In obedience to which, the old clerk immediately presented himself on the threshold. The door swung noiselessly back to its place, but without attempting to advance, he still stood in the same spot, hesitating and irresolute, till the master asked, impatiently, "Well, Royton, why do you stand there without speaking? if you have anything to say, say it at once."

"Yes, sir, I have something to say; that is, if you are at liberty to listen. I want to have some private talk with you, sir," he added, humbly.

"Private talk with me!" repeated the merchant in a tone of unmistakable surprise, knitting his massive brow and measuring the clerk with a broad stare of inquiry. The expression of drooping weariness was gone, and all his keen perceptions were on the alert to meet the requirements of the moment. He was again the man of indomitable energy and calm, collected mental power. He made a sign for Giles Royton to come nearer, which he instantly obeyed, making a desperate effort to overcome his habitual awe of Daniel Crawton.

"Now, Royton, please to explain your strange words, for I am at a loss to know why you want private talk with me."

"I scarcely know how to begin, sir," faltered the clerk, "for I know it is a subject on which you have forbidden any one to speak, and I shall have to throw myself on your forbearance and mercy."

"Go on," said the voice, whose stern tone of command almost scattered the courage which the speaker had gathered to his aid; but he managed to get out the words: "What I have to say, sir, concerns your nephew."

"My nephew; why not speak to Mr. Mark himself?"

A faint flush stole into Giles Royton's face as he replied, "Not Mr. Mark, sir, but our late cashier, Mr. Hugh Crawton."

The merchant started and looked keenly at the speaker, a frown gathering darkly over his face: none would have guessed what a pang of pain the unexpected mention of that name had shot through

his heart. Giles Royton did not guess it; he found his master's reception of the subject so forbidding, that his resolution almost failed him, and he was at that moment sorely in need of his daughter's sustaining help.

The merchant spoke coldly. "I am aware, Royton, that you are one of the few who unavoidably became acquainted with the facts of that unhappy business. You know also my wish for strict silence to be observed respecting it. A seal has been set upon it hitherto, which, as an old and trusted servant, I should not suppose that you would break now without some sufficient reason."

"Yes, sir, I have reason," replied Giles Royton, at last stung into boldness; "but I will tell what I know, and you shall judge for yourself. My fault lies in keeping that seal of silence when I should have broken it."

"What do you mean, Royton?"

"That I have been a weak-minded, selfish coward, and played with the truth, thinking to serve my own ends; and held my tongue when I ought to have spoken out for the sake of justice to an innocent man, and the detection of a villain."

A deadly paleness overspread the old man's face; he put his hand to his head as though the words had stunned him, and his frame seemed to reel and tremble in his chair. The clerk feared that he was going to faint, and instinctively stepped forward to offer him support; but Daniel Crawton gathered himself up, and found voice to speak.

"Royton, you talk in riddles. Did you say justice to the innocent? You cannot mean—No, no, I will not delude myself by any such vain hope. Explain—explain, Royton!"

"Yes, sir, I have been wanting to do it for months past, but hadn't courage to set about the work. If I hadn't been a coward, or something worse, I should never have let Mr. Hugh be sent away at a minute's notice, for a thing that he had no more hand in, or knowledge of, than yourself."

"Royton! what is this you are saying? If they are only words without foundation, and you have dared to make such a cruel mockery, I will never forgive you—never, never!"

"You need not fear, sir; I have proof enough to satisfy any judge or jury in England. See here, Mr. Crawton, you will recognise this, for you have seen something like it before;" and hastily searching his pocket, the clerk drew out a soiled, blotted piece of paper, which he unfolded and placed in his master's hand. It was a duplicate copy of the receipt for £200, paid in on Lever and Balderstone's account, and signed by Hugh Crawton, like the original document which had supplied such crushing evidence against the suspected cashier. But there was some significant difference about the paper, which Giles Royton submitted to his master; it showed frequent marks of blundering, repeti-

tions, and erasures, where the real handwriting of the forger had insensibly cropped out upon that which he was trying to imitate.

The merchant's face blanched, and his hand shook as his glance fell upon it, and he asked, tremblingly, "Where does this come from, Royton? and—and what does it mean?"

"That this receipt and the one like it are forgeries, sir, like the figures in the cash-book; for that £200 of Lever and Balderstone's did not happen to fall into Mr. Hugh's hands. He never touched it, and he never knew that the book had been tampered with, any more than you did."

"He did not, you say—he did not! Oh, my boy—my boy! Innocent! thank God!"

There was a brief but most expressive silence, which the merchant was the first to break. "Now it remains for me to inquire further into this strange discovery; it has plainly been the work of some one who—"

He stopped, but the clerk finished the sentence for him. "Some one who had a design to ruin Mr. Hugh."

"Do you know the author of this base work?"

"Yes, sir, to my sorrow I do."

"Does he hold office in this firm?"

"Y-e-s," was the hesitating answer.

"Tell me his name. I must sift the matter at once, for my nephew must be cleared."

In reply, Giles Royton smoothed out another soiled piece of paper, which he had kept in his hand—a torn, crumpled corner of a sheet, on which the name of Mark Danson was traced in bold, legible characters.

He handed it to his master, saying, "If you have not destroyed it, sir, you will be able to match this with the other part."

It was the piece which had been purposely torn from the betting voucher, found in Hugh Crawton's drawer. The merchant took it wonderingly.

"You remember the betting voucher, sir? that belongs to it: you will find that the parts fit together."

Daniel Crawton's lips moved, but no sound came. At last he found voice to falter, "Why do you give me this, Royton?"

The clerk was sensible of a sudden stir of pity for his master. He knew what a shock his next words would give.

"You asked me for his name, sir; it is there; that paper belonged to him; he had others of the same kind."

The merchant dropped into his chair, as though he had been suddenly struck down. "My nephew, Mark Danson! Oh, it cannot be!"

Then it was Giles Royton's painful task to again go over the story, which he had related to Hugh Crawton. Step by step he unfolded the dark meshes of Mark Danson's villany, followed by the rapt, strained attention of the listener, who sat with bowed head, not interrupting by a single word, while he went on piling up the condemning evidence against the trusted, favoured one, upon whose gratitude the uncle had such heavy claims. All was exposed—the hidden gambling sins, with all the specious acts of deception by which he had blinded even the keen-sighted principal; and, lastly, his secret marriage. All was told; nor did the narrator spare himself. He freely admitted the motives which had led him to keep the secret, and made a humble, penitent confession of his own besetting sin, which had put him in the power of Mark Danson.

"We will talk this over another time, Royton," sighed his master. "At present, our first thought must be for the one who has suffered most—Hugh Crawton. Have you seen him lately?"

"Yes, sir."

"Does he know what his cousin has done?" he asked, bringing out his words with painful difficulty.

"No, sir. I told him all except the name, which I purposely kept back until to-day, when I meant to tell him in my own way. I believe they are great friends; Mr. Mark is persuading him to emigrate (a scheme to get him out of the way): they meet by appointment to-day to make arrangements."

"Ah! then that was his engagement," muttered the merchant in parenthesis.

The speaker went on: "I gave Mr. Hugh a hint that I should drop in upon them as if by accident; but he knows nothing further. I bound him to secrecy; for I have my own reasons for wishing to meet Mr. Mark face to face. But I meant to ask if you would go with me, sir?"

"Yes, I will," was the decisive answer.

Giles Royton glanced at the mantel clock, saying, "We shall be in good time to catch them together, sir."

Daniel Crawton said nothing, but rang the bell, gave some needful attention to business for the next few minutes, and issued some orders in a hard, dry, mechanical tone; then he turned to the clerk, saying, curtly, "Now, Royton, in five minutes I shall be ready to go with you."

(To be continued.)

THE REJECTORS OF OUR LORD.—IV.

BY THE REV. G. A. CHADWICK, M.A.

JUDAS.

"Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."



HERE are two apparent discrepancies in the story of the last days of Judas Iscariot. We read that this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and again, that the priests, having taken counsel, bought it to bury strangers in. Now, nothing could be more likely than that Judas had opened a negotiation beforehand for the land; and this very fact induced the priests to think of completing the bargain. Again, we read that Judas hanged himself; and also that falling headlong he burst asunder. Is it not more than probable that the headlong fall was from the rope, which in his distress and agitation he failed rightly to adjust? And let it be observed that we are not bound to show how these things agree, but only that agreement is not actually impossible. We may see that a dissected map can be re-adjusted, and believe that all the pieces are part of a fair plan, although their arrangement throughout is not yet clear to us. This principle should be borne in mind in all questions of gospel harmony; for there is a vast difference between showing that a given scheme would remove difficulties, and insisting that it is the only scheme which would do so. The former is often necessary in defence of the truth; the latter seldom or never. Our harmonies are of much use in controversy; little for edification.

We are not to suppose that the evil character of Judas was ripe when Christ, after a night of prayer, chose him as one of the Twelve. Nothing was in him which might not have been amended, if he would have it so. Like the others, he was upon his trial; and although the all-seeing Eye could have foretold the end from the beginning, no truth is clearer than that God's knowledge of the future never prevents him from acting simply upon the present. He gives us his good things to be enjoyed, and out of his benevolence, although there are countless cases in which men have to grieve over the results. How much more must He grieve? It is true, and awfully true, that since Judas refused to be led to a higher place than common men in the kingdom of the Father, he sank to the lowest place of all, by virtue of that very apostleship which Jesus put upon him. But what is here to stumble at? Are not strivings of the Spirit given to the reprobate, and glimpses of truth, and solemn warnings, and hours in which the awe-struck soul fears and trembles before its angry God—and do not these increase the con-

demnation? Does not genius curse every rarely-gifted man who fails to make of it a blessing for himself and others? Is not wealth as often a bane as a benefit to its owner? How many times has the gift of beauty been fatal to woman; and conversational powers and a noble voice led young men into excess and ruin? We know that our Father meant all these things to be improved, and that their perversion is part of the bad wilfulness of man. There can, then, be little difficulty in understanding the call of Judas to so high a place, which is only the most stupendous and terrible example of the same principle. Grace would have been given by which to stand, had he not, slowly perhaps but surely, turned away from the spiritual influences and teaching of his Lord. Archbishop Trench has pointed out, in the story of his fall, elements of strength sufficient to explain the choice of him. What force of character enabled him to mingle day by day with the eleven, who knew that a traitor was among them, and escape suspicion. They were told that one of them was a devil, and should betray Christ; yet they trusted him with the bag, and were tempted by him into a share of his indignation against Mary's gift of ointment. "How marvellous a self-command does all this imply—that he should never have winged under those piercing but loving words with which his Lord sought to win him back from his sin; never by one incautious word, or look, or gesture, betrayed to those with whom he was living in intercourse the most familiar, the world of evil thoughts and imaginations which was harbouring within him." How cool and fearless was his offer to the priests—"What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" and how imperturbable the nerve which did not slink away when the victim was run down, but stood with the officers, and betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss! Great, also, was the bosom which had scope for the convulsions which were to follow; for the agony that drove him into that reserved part of the temple where only the priests might go,* there to throw down the money and confess his treason against innocent blood; for the remorse which could destroy, if it could not purify his heart.

So much the more instructive are the lessons which his fall conveys. If an apostle perished, who can trust to official dignity for salvation? Yet there is real danger of such false confidence still. The Sunday-school teacher, the collector

* This is implied in the word translated "temple" (Matt. xxvii. 5), which is only used of the holy and the most holy place.

friendly nod. He felt more at home this time, and joined in the conversation, and cracked his joke with the best. After being pressed a great deal, he sang "The Death of Nelson." Rounds of applause greeted the performance. Elated with his success, the victim was induced to repeat the experiment again and again, and drank so much to moisten his throat for these operations, that in the end he had to be sent home in a coach.

Next day, too ill to attend to business, he bitterly repented the indiscretions of the previous night, and firmly resolved never more to attend any harmonic meeting, however select. He knew not himself. He had tasted of a tempting, although poisoned, chalice; had put gyves upon his own wrists, which he could not throw off at pleasure. By a strange fascination, he was very soon drawn again to the "Hat and Plume." The convivia had begun to know him, and greeted his return with such demonstrations of good fellowship as tavern-frequenters are wont to indulge in. Everybody was ready to treat him, and everybody called him a fine fellow. Alas! poor John Parker was approaching destruction, just as the silly moth, attracted by the glare of the taper, basks in its glow, and exults in its beams, venturing nearer and nearer, until the cruel, delusive flame catches it to its embrace of death.

In a very brief space, once a week at the tavern was not sufficient. Mary sighed as she saw the man she so much loved sinking step by step, and advised a return to the older and better fashion of things. Her husband grew ill-tempered, and, what was worse, left off attending his church. His clergyman dropped in, but John saw him coming, and got out of the way.

Mary had hitherto managed to save something, however trifling, out of their income; but when at the end of one month it was discovered that there was no surplus at all to take to the savings-bank, her grief was most poignant; she was thinking of Bessie's future. The author of the evil tried to look cross, and spoke sharp; but his conscience accused him so forcibly, that he was glad, by promises of amendment, to endeavour to soften her suffering. The fond wife urged him to commence reforming on the spot. He replied that he was ready to do so; he was, however, compelled to go out that night, but it should be the last time.

Would that it had been the last time! The fact was, John's vanity had so grown by what it had fed on, that he was now never happy if his leisure was not passed in some public parlour. One set of tavern-frequenters introduced him to another: he was hail fellow wherever he went.

Confidence between husband and wife was in

a great measure destroyed, for John now thought nothing of deceiving his partner. The once bright, industrious man grew dull and idle. Late hours and drinking did not agree with the duties of the day. His employers detected the change, and reprov'd him; he promised amendment, but broke his word, and was discharged as no longer trustworthy.

St. George was the first to pass him unnoticed. John felt his degradation intensely, and flew for solace to the bottle. Sometimes a transient fit of good resolve would nerve him to endeavour. On one of these occasions he sought and obtained another, though subordinate, situation. The whole of their savings had been swallowed up some time since.

His wife now, like a good angel, cheered him all she could, and urged that the lost ground might yet be regained, if John would only keep to his good resolutions. Strange to say, he no sooner found himself the master of a few shillings, than he again returned to his former follies.

Once more he lost his employment. He sought fresh, but dissipation was written on his countenance, and nobody would have anything to do with him. Want stole into his home. One by one, articles of clothing and furniture found their way to the broker's; and Mary at length was glad to hire herself out to charring and washing, so that her cripple-child might not starve.

John, thoroughly debased in his own eyes, could face nobody by day, and often, in his sober moments, seemed half mad. He had not earned a single penny for months, when a publican, at whose house he had often been, met him and asked the cause of his evident distress. The reply was, "Want of employment." Thereupon the other made an offer of three shillings a night, if he would come twice a week and preside over an harmonic meeting at his tavern, and fill up any gaps, and, indeed, keep the entertainment going.

The wretched creature readily grasped at the offer, and now his degradation was complete. Other engagements of a similar character followed. The money thus earned was almost wholly spent in drink, and the chief part of each day was passed in slumbering away the effects of the previous night's debauch. Tears and entreaties were of no avail. "I'm done for," he used to say, "and the sooner under the turf the better."

Sometimes Bessie, with her little fondling ways, would endeavour to win a promise that he would not go to the public-house for one night.

His eyes would fill with tears as he replied, "Ah, my poor child, I've no other way of getting an honest penny. Your old dad is ruined, body and soul."

CHAPTER III.—THE ALARM.

ONE evening, Bessy was sitting all alone, waiting her mother's return from a day's work, when a strange man presented himself, and asked if Mr. Parker was at home.

"No, sir," she answered.

"Where can I find him?" said the man.

"I don't know, sir."

"Are you his daughter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, now, don't be frightened at what I'm going to tell you. Your mother has been run over, and is lying in St. Thomas's Hospital."

"Oh, my dear—dear mother!" exclaimed the terrified child. "Oh, do let me go and see her!"

"There—there, my dear, don't alarm yourself, and you *shall* go and see her."

"Oh, thank you!—thank you! Oh, father—father, why did you go out to-night? Oh, my dear mother! Will she die, sir?"

"Now do not go on so, there's a *good* child," cried the messenger; "your mother, very likely, will be better to-morrow. She asked us to fetch your father, as she wanted to see him badly."

"I'm sure I don't know where father is gone," sighed Bessie; "but don't let us wait for father, sir, he's so very uncertain, and perhaps I may do as well."

"I'll deliver any message you like to leave for him, if so be as he comes in," said an old woman, hobbling up from the far end of the passage, where she had been resting a pail of water, and listening to the conversation; "I lives in the two-pair back."

"Oh, thank you," he returned. "If you'll be so good as to say that Mrs. Parker has met with an accident."

"Not serus, I hope?"

"I cannot tell you the exact amount of injury; but say she is in St. Thomas's Hospital, and wishes to see him."

Then turning to Bessie, who had caught on an old bonnet and shawl, and bidding her not to be downhearted, he turned into the street.

When they reached the bed of the unfortunate woman, the doctor was just quitting her. She lay apparently dead. A cry was upon the child's lips,

when the patient opened her eyes, and a faint smile stole over her face.

"My poor Bessie," whispered the woman, as tears and kisses fell together upon her cheek, "don't fret. Where is father? I must see him. I think I am going to die, dear."

"Oh, mother! oh, my mother, do not say that," sobbed the little one.

"I believe so," continued the sufferer, "and I think that if I could speak to your father, my dying words might, with the blessing of God, be the means of calling him back to a sense of duty."

Suddenly the voice ceased. The speaker had swooned.

"You must leave your mother for a time," said the doctor, coming forward. "Sister," addressing a comely little woman standing near, "take care of this little girl awhile."

The sister, or superintendent of the nurses, led the heart-broken child away to her own private room, and endeavoured to get her to take some refreshment. No, she must go and find her father. So, picking up her crutch, she thanked the sister, hopped down-stairs, and made for London Bridge. With a prayer on her lips the poor, weary thing—she was but ten years old, and little for her age—threaded her way through the crowds, till at length she once more reached her dreary home. To her great discomfiture, the place was locked up, and nobody within. This house, like many another thereabouts, was let out in tenements, and at this moment only a small portion of it was occupied, in consequence of some recent seizures for rent. Her father had got the key, so it was impossible to get in. None of the neighbours had seen anything of him during her absence. Had it been one of his regular engagement nights, she would have known where to have sought him; but it was not. There was a chance, however, of dropping upon him in some public-house in the neighbourhood. She wandered all round, peeping into one and listening outside another, that she might haply catch the sound of his voice. The labour was fruitless, and the disappointed one returned to her own doorstep, determined to quit it no more till her father *did* return.

(To be concluded in our next.)

WITNESSES FROM THE DEAD.

III.—BASHAN.

THE land of giants, according to the Bishop of Natal, is unhistorical. Og, and his bedstead nine cubits in length, are traditionary myths of fabulous times; and the narratives contained in Numbers and Chronicles, interesting enough in the days of that doubtful personality

named Moses, are proved to be quite unworthy of credence in the presence of a searching criticism. The description of Argob, a province in Bashan, which is said to have contained sixty fenced cities, standing on an area thirty miles in length and twenty in breadth is, of course, mere romance in the light of such criticism. Let us see.

An answer to these misrepresentations, as com-

plete as it is conclusive, is found in the record of the travels of Mr. Porter. He says: "I have seen that it is all literally true." Such testimony is alike seasonable and conclusive. What is most remarkable and exceptional in the condition of ancient edifices, the buildings, and towns, and villages of Bashan remain in their first condition, many in an entirely unbroken state; in fact, just as they were built 3,000 years ago. The grandeur of its oaks, and the fertility of its plains, and the unrivalled size of its cattle, "fatlings of Bashan," have not yet altogether ceased to exist. The oak towering up into sublime magnificence still speaks to the traveller in every gale, and from every mountain-side "the sacred writers stated facts." There is enough of its original greatness left to enable the impartial and unprejudiced traveller to discover it is the Bashan of the Word of God; while the ruins that remain of gigantic fortresses bear witness to the tides of war that have successively swept over it with resistless fury. Grand churches, that in the days of St. Paul resounded with the praises of the Prince of Peace, stand deserted and silent. The crescent sheds its baleful influence so far over the minds of barbarous hordes who, under its shadow, render life unsafe and residence impossible, that the re-occupation of the numerous empty churches must still be adjourned.

Bashan, or Eastern Palestine, has been very much overlooked by travellers in consequence of the richer attractions and historic glories of the western sister. Yet it was inhabitants from Bashan who sat and wept, and hung their harps on the willows, as they remembered Zion. Their past is neither bare nor unimportant; it survives in its integrity, a witness from the dead. Its long isolation has made it a marvellously living and rich representative of ancient Eastern life in its various phases, and of a race of Rephaim, long extinct—so far favourably contrasting with Western Palestine, on which European habits leave every year a deeper and a modern impression. Mr. Porter observes: "Jericho has disappeared; Bethel is come to nought; Samaria is as an heap of the field. The state of Bashan, however, is totally different. It is literally crowded with towns and thick set with villages; and though the vast majority is deserted of every inhabitant, they are nevertheless not ruins. Many of the houses in the ancient cities of Bashan are perfect and tenable as if only finished yesterday; the walls are sound, the roofs unbroken, the doors, and even the window-shutters, in their places." But how can we explain this extraordinary and visible preservation of ordinary houses in a land of ruins, and for upwards of 2,000 years? Mr. Porter explains: "The houses of Bashan are not ordinary houses. The walls are from 5 feet to 8 feet thick, built of

large squared blocks of basalt. The roofs are formed of slabs of the same material, hewn like planks, and reaching from wall to wall. The very doors and window-shutters are of stone, hung on pivots projecting above and below. Some of these ancient cities have from 200 to 500 houses still perfect. From the battlements of the castle of Salcah I counted some thirty towns and villages dotting the surface of the vast plain, many of them almost as perfect as when they were built, and yet for more than five centuries there has not been a single inhabitant in one of them." This is a most remarkable fact. But the traveller gives one instance, or specimen, with greater detail:—

"This house seemed to have undergone little change from the time its old master had left it, and yet the thick nitrous crust on the floor showed it had been deserted for long ages. The walls were perfect, nearly 5 feet thick, built of large blocks of hewn stones, without lime or cement of any kind. The roof was formed of large slabs of the same black basalt, lying as regularly, and jointed as closely, as if the workmen had only just completed them. Each measures 12 feet in length, 18 inches in breadth, and 6 inches in thickness. The ends rested on a plain stone cornice, projecting about a foot from each side wall. The chamber was 20 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 10 feet high. The outer door was a slab of stone, 4½ feet high, 4 feet wide, and 8 inches thick. It hung upon pivots formed of projecting parts of the slab, working in sockets in the lintel and threshold, and, though so massive, I was able to open and shut it with ease. At one end of the room was a small window, with a stone shutter. An inner door, also of stone, but of finer workmanship, and not quite so heavy as the other, admitted to a chamber of the same size and appearance. From it a much larger door communicated with a third chamber, to which there was a descent by a flight of stone steps. This was a spacious hall, about 25 feet long by 20 feet high. A semicircular arch was thrown across it, supporting the stone roof, and a gate, so large that camels could pass in and out, opened on the street." Burckhardt says that it bears date B.C. 306.

Moses alludes to the strong cities of Bashan—their lofty walls and gates, and states it was then called "the land of giants." The ruins alone vindicate Deuteronomy. It seems natural—almost inevitable—to infer that in these far remote times, when neither steam nor machinery existed, none but men of extraordinary stature, and corresponding physical strength, could have hewn and laid these stones, and have constructed and arranged these cities and houses. One door in Keriath of Moab measures 9 feet high, and 4½ feet wide, and 10 inches thick, and consists of solid stone. These

cities of Bashan appear, so far, as witnesses from the dead to the historic accuracy of the Pentateuch, and just in those portions where it has been violently impugned. While the buildings raised at a subsequent era by the Romans in portions of Bashan, consisting of temples, tombs, fortresses, are broken and dismantled ruins, everywhere, the houses of the giants—the aboriginal inhabitants of Bashan—are as perfect and inhabitable as if finished in A.D. 1869.

Mr. Graham, a daring and successful traveller in these deserted streets and untenanted houses, justly observes: "When we find one after another great stone cities, walled and unwall'd, with stone gates, and so crowded together that it becomes almost matter of wonder how all the people could have lived in so small a place; when we see houses built of such huge and massive stones that no force which could be brought against them in that country could ever batter them down; when we find rooms in these houses so large and lofty that many of them would be considered fine rooms in a palace in Europe; and, lastly, when we find some of these towns bearing the very names which cities in that very country bore before the Israelites came out of Egypt, we cannot help feeling the strongest conviction that we have before us the cities of the Rephaim, or giants, of which we read in the book of Deuteronomy."

We see that "Og, King of Bashan, the last of the Rephaim," was an historic character, "and his iron bedstead," an article of furniture 9 cubits long, and 4 cubits broad, by no means a romantic size; that sixty cities in Argob were literal facts, and that these, from the silence of the tomb in which they lie, therefore attest the historic truth of God's Holy Word, and condemn the rashness of its assailants.

"The mountains of Bashan, though not generally very steep, are rugged and rocky, yet everywhere on their sides I saw the remains of old terraces along every slope, up every bank, from the bottom of the deepest glen to the highest peak on which the clouds of heaven stoop. These tell of former toil and industry, and so do the heaps of loose stones that have been collected off the soil and piled up in the corners of the little fields. In the days of Bashan's glory fig-trees, and olives, and pomegranates were ranged along these terraces, and vines hung down in rich festoons over their broken walls."

If we desire the most exact picture of Bashan as it now is, after reading what it once was, we shall find it in a prophecy uttered by Joel 2,500 years ago. "A nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree, he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away. The field is wasted, the land mourneth. The new wine is dried

up, the oil languisheth. The vine is dried up, the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men."

Nor is Isaiah less graphic, or less true to existing facts. "Your highways shall be desolate. The wayfaring man ceaseth. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth: therefore the inhabitants of the land are consumed, and few men left. Every house is shut up, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction."

"The destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant" (Jer. iv. 7).

To the accuracy of every clause of these sublime prophecies a witness rises from the ruins of Bashan. The graphic prophecy remains in the sacred volume, and the dumb yet eloquent witness lies amid the dismantled cities and deserted buildings of Bashan; a voice rings from the solitary chambers, the forsaken fortresses, and from the withered vines and pomegranates on the slopes of its hills and rocks. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Bashan is a copy, in fact, of what is written in words in ancient prophecy. The finger of history re-writes the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Joel, even the whole area of Bashan in undeniable facts. Bashan attests from the dead that all the prophets foretold has come to pass, and that not a jot or tittle in the prophecy has failed to be translated into fact. No evidence of Deity is greater or more complete than that which delineates with minutest accuracy events complicated and unlikely, and distant upwards of 2,000 years. It defies all contradiction. It looks as if wind, and rain, and storms, and wandering tribes, and earthquake, and silence, and death had laid open before them the pages of Moses, and Isaiah, and Joel, and had spent long centuries in sculpturing on rock, and ruin, and building, and mountain-slopes what inspiration has written on its gleaming page. Every fact has fallen into its predestined place in order that neither "jot nor tittle" may be wanting in the grand transformation of "what is written" into what exists.

If the footprints of God be traceable anywhere, it is in the tangible exhibition and embodiment in deeds and facts of records and prophecies written some 2,000 years ago; and if inspiration is latent anywhere, it is in those written and ancient prophecies which find their definite and cumulative fulfilment every day, and on every area of

Europe and Asia. The stone literally cries out of the wall in the ears of Christendom, and thirty centuries rise from the dead in the sight of the world, and claim to be the attesting witnesses to all who have an ear to hear, that the Bible is no

cunningly devised fable, but the book of God—the lamp from off the everlasting throne, increasing in lustre as science multiplies its discoveries and the varied kingdoms of nature become more familiar.

FRANK'S AMBITION.

TURRAH! Jack, have you heard the news?"

"What news do you mean, Harry? Some extra lessons to learn, I suppose. Nothing good, I'm sure."

"Now, Jack, you are wrong again; always looking on the black side of things. We are to have a holiday to-morrow. Master is going into the town to buy the prizes."

"Well, Harry, I'm glad we are to have a holiday; but no doubt it will rain, it generally does when I want to go out: and as to the prizes, none of them are for me, I'm sure; no such luck!"

"What a grumbling fellow you are, Jack; nothing pleases you. Why should you not get a prize as well as any other boy, if you choose to try? all the boys in our class are trying except you."

"Yes, and who do you think has any chance with Frank Mason, the favourite, who seems to learn lessons without looking at them sometimes?" replied Jack.

This conversation was carried on in the playground of a large school in one of the midland counties; the two youths already introduced to the reader were cousins, who had received equal educational advantages, but, owing to the unhappy disposition of Jack, he had not made so much progress as his light-hearted cousin, who was always hoping and trying, and generally succeeded in what he undertook to do, looking always on the bright side.

Just as the two boys had left off chatting, the youth in question, Frank Mason, made his appearance. His character will be best understood by the following dialogue.

"Well, boys," said he, "how many marks did you get this morning? I do not exactly know how many I got; but suppose at least fifty for all the subjects. I did not make a single mistake in any lesson. My essay was capital, many a worse one in print, I bet; but that spooney, the second master, had to read it, unfortunately, and I'm pretty sure he can't judge its merits."

"Oh, Frank!" exclaimed Harry, "how can you talk of good, kind Mr. Lomax in that way, when you know he has taught you all you know? Well, you have a conscience to make yourself better than he is."

"Not so fast, young Harry, if you please. Just remember that I knew a great deal before coming to

this school, and, between ourselves, these masters can't teach me much more."

"All right, Frank, then that being the case you're safe to get all the prizes; but how is it that you are always copying Tom's Latin?"

"Hush! be quiet, Harry, don't split on a fellow; besides, I only did it to save time. I could have made a much better translation if I had not been in a hurry to do the other lessons. What do you say, Jack; you know how quickly I did a lesson for you the other day?"

"As to that," replied Jack, "I got no credit for it, master said it was all wrong; but no wonder as it was mine, I did not expect anything else: my lessons are never right."

"Well, Jack, I fear what you say is correct; for I am sure no master who knew anything could have found fault with that lesson. Never mind, old fellow; cheer up; better luck next time."

With this the school-bell rang, and all were at once assembled in the schoolroom. The holiday of the morrow was announced, which met with universal applause; indeed, the good news had better been withheld till the close of the school, for such was the excitement occasioned by the anticipated holiday that nothing else was thought of, and many were the attempts to set order at defiance, to discuss their various plans to spend the following day.

At last the hour of departure arrived, many were the joyous exclamations and proposed plans for the morrow. Our three young friends agreed to spend the day together, and decided upon a boating excursion. Frank made one stipulation with his companions, this was that he should return early, to go, as he said, to a party; but the truth was, he intended to deceive them, by leading them to suppose that he was enjoying himself, instead of which he resolved to work hard at his lessons, so as to secure to himself all the prizes which were shortly to be distributed.

I must here tell you that Frank was a most unscrupulous lad, for while using every means to attain this object, he was guilty of many underhand tricks to depreciate the other boys in the estimation of their preceptors, and often made a pretence to help them with their lessons, taking care to make plenty of mistakes for them to bear the blame of.

At length the looked-for hour arrived: the boat was hired; two were to row, and one to steer. After

proceeding a few miles up the river, they exchanged places, it becoming Frank's turn to steer.

"I say, Jack, what is that in your jacket-pocket; it looks like Latin?"

"Oh, yes, so it is. I told Tom Brown I was in trouble with that Latin verse, and he has lent me his as a guide; but I promised not to copy it exactly."

"What! do you mean to say that Tom has done that lesson already? What a sly dog he is! Do let me find out all his mistakes, then I will put you up to doing yours better than his."

Poor simple Jack was easily duped into accepting this proposal; but wily Frank, instead of attempting any corrections, suggested and made a few alterations which quite destroyed the composition, taking care at the same time to make a fair copy of the original for himself; and being so busily engaged with this manœuvring, quite forgot his duty as steersman. The other boys called out to him, but too late; the boat ran into a barge, and immediately capsized. The three boys were struggling in the water, and calling loudly for help. Fortunately for them, the bargeman was near at hand, and soon succeeded in bringing them on shore, so that beyond getting wet through, and losing their jackets, they appeared to have sustained no injury. The kind bargeman took them into his cottage, which was hard by, and with the help of his wife dried their clothes, wrapped them up in old shawls and coats, and having borrowed a neighbour's cart, was soon driving them on the road to each of their respective homes, promising to restore the boat to its owner on the following day. The poor man was thanked and liberally rewarded by the parents of the boys, for his timely aid, and the precaution he had taken to prevent any evil result from the immersion.

On the following day, Jack and Harry seemed to have quite recovered from the effects of the accident, and were able to resume their duties at school; but Frank, although he persisted in going to school, was struggling against nature, and before the morning school was concluded, pleaded a severe headache, and was compelled to return home. Several days passed on, and still Frank was confined to his room, the cold having left him with a low fever, and it was now in the solitary hours of night that conscience began to work within him, and lead him to consider all the devices and schemes he had practised to secure the forthcoming prizes; nor could he forget that his illness was actually caused by one of these underhand plots to raise himself at the expense of his schoolfellows. He had now no hopes of any prize; he had lost his marks for a fortnight, and at last, when he was able to go to school, it was just in time to witness the distribution of the prizes to those who had fairly earned them. Our little friend Harry received one for good conduct. Sulky Jack was admonished to become more industrious; but he still persisted in attributing his want of success to ill-

luck, although his kind master assured him that luck was nothing more than hard work and perseverance.

But of all the pupils the most unhappy was Frank; his pride was wounded by discovering that the master had read his character, and he was duly lectured before the whole school, and many of his schemes, which he thought no one knew but himself, commented upon most severely. Last of all, to his great chagrin, his lost jacket was produced, and the proofs of his last acts of treachery held up to view. With this, the master told him he had a painful duty to perform, and he now duly informed him that he was to consider himself expelled from the school from that day.

We will not dwell upon the disgraceful position of Frank, and only hope it proved a salutary lesson, and checked in his youth that which might have developed itself into very serious crimes in the man.

M. N.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA ON

PAGE 736.

"But the Lord liveth."—Jer. xvi. 15.

1. Bohan's	Josh. xviii. 17.
2. U lam's	1 Chron. viii. 40.
3. T rophimus	2 Tim. iv. 20.
4. T ibhath	1 Chron. xviii. 8.
5. H oham	Josh. x. 3.
6. E d	Josh. xxii. 34.
7. L achish	2 Chron. xiv. 27.
8. O phrah	Judg. vi. 11.
9. R immon	Judg. xx. 47.
10. D ebir	Josh. x. 3.
11. L ebonah	Judg. xxi. 19.
12. I shtob	2 Sam. x. 6.
13. V ashti	Esth. ii. 1.
14. E phraim	Judg. xii. 4.
15. T iglath-pileser	2 Kings xv. 29.
16. H ille's	Judg. xii. 15.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

1. What king of nations against Sodom fought?
2. Into what town was Israel captive brought?
3. Where Israel's host their first encampment made.
4. Where fled a king his murderers to evade?
5. Beside whose floor God's angel took his stand?
6. In what king's reign did Shishak spoil the land?
7. What town did Othniel take, his wife to gain?
8. What priest escaped when all the rest were slain?
9. What queen her royal rank was forced to yield?
10. Where David's messengers remained concealed.
11. Who rode to view Jerusalem by night?
12. Against what town did Nadab vainly fight?
13. In what stronghold did David long abide?
14. A cave where five kings vainly sought to hide.
15. The place where Israel with Philistia fought,
And where the ark into the camp was brought.

When David saw within his power
The king, his greatest foe,
He said these words, which still to us
A Christian's duty show.